



BellaBuzzy

An Official Publication of the BellaVita Homeowners Association

BellaVita Clubhouse

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MESSAGE FROM THE HOA BOARD PRESIDENT - RUTH SOUTHARD



The March issue of the BUZZ has in past years provided annual reports from working committees and task forces. The Board of Directors has worked conscientiously on your behalf in a very cordial professional manner. It has been my pleasure to serve as President with these gentlemen this year; and, as you'll read in this issue, much has been accomplished.

2014 is particularly important in the community. Even though the actual age of BellaVita is 13 years, homeowner-operated HOA began five years ago in 2009. Typically, five years is a milestone in any organization and that applies to BellaVita.

First, as part of the annual meeting on March 26, the Awards Committee will be unveiling a "Volunteer" wall in the Clubhouse where those homeowners who have served five years in some capacity will be recognized.

Next, we came to understand and appreciate our privilege of self-government when the board voted NOT to permit the City of Pearland to enforce traffic laws on the private streets.

There was good attendance at a seminar conducted recently by attorney Marc Markel. Mr. Markel reviewed the BellaVita governing documents which authorize board actions. As a follow-up to the seminar, the board is having the documents reviewed for consistency and accuracy.

The Board of Directors took a giant leap in resolving the issue of fences. The board had to grapple with the history of misleading information and bad decision-making on the part of the builder among other concerns in determining the "right" decision for this community. A Task Force reviewed the actions of other active adult communities and, in the end, the BellaVita Board of Directors selected a very inclusive solution. The fence project is expected to take several years and information updates will be available to homeowners throughout the project.

Finally, the year 2014 is the first time a majority of the board positions are open. The Elections Committee has worked diligently to update the database of homeowners so that all eligible voters will have the opportunity to vote. As President of your HOA, I cannot stress enough the importance of your participation in this election. The Board of Directors is the governing body that makes decisions on your behalf about the community in which you live. Ballots are due March 19, 2014. Choose carefully and then attend the annual meeting on March 26 for the State of the Association report and the celebration of the new directors and all of those who serve.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION

Connie Harry, Chairperson

VOTE!

The deadline is quickly approaching for our 2014 election for the Board of Directors. By the time you are reading this article, all potential candidates will have filed their Willingness to Serve forms and a mail out will have been sent to all homeowners including copies of these forms.

There were two Meet the Candidate Forums scheduled: February 26, 2014 and March 1, 2014. Hopefully, each of you has taken the time from your busy schedule to attend.

The final mail out with Ballots will be in the mail March 6, 2014, and the ballots are due by March 19, 2014. The locked ballot box will be taken by the committee to the offices of First Service Residential to be opened and the ballots counted in accordance with state law. All ballots will be certified as being completed and signed by a registered homeowner and then votes cast will be counted by the management company personnel and by the elections committee. The election will be certified by the Elections Committee at the annual meeting on March 26, 2014, at which time the newly elected Directors will be named. The actual results of the election will be made available as quickly as possible following the vote count.

Please watch your mail box for the Ballot and PLEASE, PLEASE, cast your ballot. There are four open positions on the board this year and this is very important to the community.

ON THE RECORD – We caught up with Michael G. Davis and Larry W. Brooks founders of the popular community real estate firm, Brooks & Davis Real Estate Firm as they attended a recent event. Here's an edited transcript of our interview with them.

Getting to Know your Community Realtor
By Vanessa Wade



Local Real Estate Company Guarantees to Sell Your Home

VW: Tell us about Brooks & Davis

B&D: Brooks & Davis is a Houston real estate firm with a heart for providing stellar customer service. With more than 19 years combined experience, we have provided our clients with the finest service, including specialized programs designed to guarantee successful closings. Our professional, knowledgeable sales associates sell in communities around the Houston area.

VW: In a Do It Yourself World (DIY); do people really need a Realtor?

B&D: Only, if you want to do things right. Working with a Realtor prevents you from overspending or making other costly mistakes. We are trained, certified and know how to sell homes. We handle all the appropriate documents on your behalf. If you choose to do it yourself and discover you are missing any documents, it could slow down or stall the process, so working with a Realtor is ideal.

VW: Are all Real Estate Firms created equal?

B&D: No. Many firms say they can sell your home, but can they? We Guarantee it! **VW:** Really! How can you do that? **B&D:** We are proud to say our superior service sets us apart. Brooks & Davis offers tips on how to stage your home, pricing points, etc. to get your home sold within 90 Days or you don't pay us AND we still market the home until it is sold. We don't make any money if your home doesn't sale. A great deal of our business comes from previous clients referrals. It lets us know people trust and respect us.

VW: What is the Philosophy of Brooks & Davis? **B&D:** We offer the 3 P's of Real Estate Solutions. Price- We make sure you get the Top Price the market will allow. Protection- We ensure you don't make any mistakes that may hurt you now or later. Problem-free- you won't find any horror stories here! There will be problems but let us be your problem solver. Once again, we work hand and hand, while we guarantee the results you want. We aren't pushy. We communicate effectively. We listen.

VW: If I am thinking of buying or selling a home what should I do first? **B&D:** Call (713) 665-8329 to receive a **FREE phone consultation** with Mr. Brooks or Mr. Davis and be entered into a drawing to receive a **FREE \$100 Gas Card**.



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FINANCE COMMITTEE

By Carol Grisanti, Chairperson

Members of your Finance Committee include: Carol Grisanti, Chairman of the Finance Committee (3 year member); Ruth Cheek (2 year member); Joan Cummings (2 year member); Pam Halloran (rejoined in 2013); Don Jensen (new member 2013); Lee Molloy (5 year member); Jim Thompson, Attorney (5 year member); and Marc Wormser, Treasurer & Board Liaison (1 year member). Currently vacant is the position for Insurance Consultant, which needs to be filled by someone knowledgeable about Commercial Insurance. In addition, the Finance Committee is always interested in new members.



What does your finance committee do for you?

1. We review Bella Vita financial statements on a monthly basis.
2. We advise the HOA board on non-budgeted expenditures.
3. We have workshops to assist in establishing an Operating budget, Capital budget and Reserve study each year. This process begins in July of each year and is completed with presenting the Operating and Capital budgets to the HOA board by the October board meeting.
4. We revise the Reserve study each year with projections for actual inflationary increases as well as for updated information since the previous study. Also, there are additions made as we become aware of major items that had not been previously included.
5. We work closely with other committees and our clubhouse Manager for budgetary purposes.

Bella Vita Homeowners monthly maintenance fee remains at \$222 for 2014 allowing an approved Operating budget of \$1,698,210 with an estimated surplus of \$128. Over half of the Capital budget of \$649,804 includes: \$240,904 for fences, \$78,000 for house painting and \$50,000 for street repairs. The 2014 Reserve budget is a work in progress. All budget documents are published on the web as the HOA Board directs.

Bella Vita is in a sound financial condition. Your Finance Committee works hard to be proactive in protecting your money and fulfilling our mission.



Grounds Committee Review of 2013

Becky Speeden, Chairperson

- Planted new vegetation, keeping with the Mediterranean theme, in the back of the clubhouse and the front of the Annex that will cut down on watering and maintenance.
- Leveled and planted vegetation where erosion was taking place by clubhouse.
- Kept the clubhouse circle blooming with flowers.
- Monitored water usage for common areas.
- Trimmed several trees in the neighborhood, including the nature reserve.
- Leveled and filled some common areas in the neighborhood.
- Interfaced with Rusticscapes concerning the common grounds contract and homeowners' concerns such as no mulch, shrub issues, etc.
- Interfaced with FSR on home owner issues, invoice procedures and service order issues.



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Keep BellaVita's Yards Healthy and Beautiful

Late Winter Early Spring Lawn Care

- 1. Keep Lawn Watered. Even in cooler weather, turf grasses appreciate supplemental watering. If we have had little to no rain, watering deeply once a week is recommended. This keeps the grass healthy and encourages a deep root system.
2. Mow Your Weeds. Even though your grass is not actively growing, there may be annual cool season weeds that have sprouted up. It is important to mow these weeds before they flower and go to seed. Keeping weeds mowed down will drastically reduce the number of your turf weeds in the future.
3. Water Early in the Morning. That's when water pressure is best, there's less wind to evaporate the moisture, and the turf will have a store of water for the warm day ahead. If you have an automatic sprinkler, schedule it to run between 3 and 8 a.m. If you water at night, you run the risk of suffering fungal diseases like brown patch.
4. Mulch is your best tool for helping a tree grow to healthy maturity, after correct watering. Maintaining mulch over the root zone (from the trunk to 2 feet beyond the drip line) of a 3 -4 year old tree, insulates the roots from summer heat and winter cold. Mulch also conserves moisture, discourages weeds, encourages beneficial soil microbes and feeds your trees.
5. Prune trees to shape the tree; keep it and the grass underneath healthy. Continue periodic pruning to make sure that limbs are not overhanging the street or driveways and that you can walk under them easily. Thinning the treetops is also necessary as the tree ages so that sunlight can penetrate to the grass, or the grass will die. Thinning limbs also keeps strong winds from blowing the tree over.
6. Keep Bushes Trimmed to a height that allows house addresses to be visible from the street for visitors and emergency personnel.



Ron Lauve, Fence Task Force Facilitator

The BellaVita Board of Directors, at its January 22, 2014 meeting, approved a motion by Wayne Johnson that was stated:

"This Board directs the Fence Task Force to prepare a Request for Proposal (RFP) to replace all original unit fences in BellaVita in the shortest elapsed time using the new standards, and further, that if one of the proposals (bids) is accepted, we replace all fences one* time, after which the new fence becomes the total responsibility of the homeowner."

Earlier in the meeting, the Task Force recommended, and the Board approved, new construction standards for metal fences which carry a 20-year limited warranty and wood fences designed to last 15 years. The Task Force has begun preparing the RFP which is the first step in the bidding/contracting process. Information regarding this process will be forthcoming as the Task Force moves forward.

The Board believes this decision treats all Homeowners equitably and is consistent with the Board's responsibility to protect property values and maintain an aesthetically pleasing and consistent appearance in the community. The concrete fence along Scarsdale Boulevard will not be included in this fence project. The responsibility for the maintenance of this fence rests with the Villas Master HOA.



Paul Ashline, Commander

The BellaVita Veterans Club Flag Program, which puts up US and Texas flags six times per year, began with flags up in February for President's Day. If residents need renewal forms or have not returned the forms distributed door-to-door in December, forms are available at the clubhouse front desk. Thank you for your participation in this patriotic visual display, the funding of which benefits the community in so many ways.

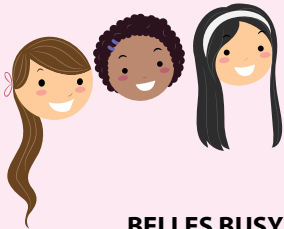
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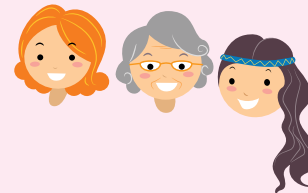
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The Bella Vita Belles

By Linda Sanders, President



BELLES BUSY SCHEDULE FOR 2014

We are off to an exciting start this year with a bevy of new and favorite activities planned for the community and the wonderful group of ladies that comprise the BellaVita Belles. The first Belles Event was the 7th Annual BellaVita de Arte chaired by Barbara Gorman. The following 17 Artists displayed their work: James Bounier, Teresa Devereux, Michael Donoho, Carol Frank, Jean Foltz, Lois Fridman, Barbara Gorman, Myra Guillot, Janice Hassinger, Rhee Haun, Judy Joe, Sandy Kelley Jones, Janet Leavesley, Walter Pasciak, Sharon Rigsby, Gail Rybiski, and Linda Sanders. Herb Ward played the Lute which provided beautiful background music for this event.

On February 23rd there was a Craft Workshop chaired by Emily Marshburn and Myra Guillot.

An Afternoon of Jazz will be forthcoming on March 23rd with the instrumental group Modulation featuring John Gilmore. This event will be chaired by Kay Simpson.

Of course the Belles will continue to host their favorites such as The Belles Tea, The Garden Tour, and The Mistletoe Market. The BellaVita Belles strive to fulfill their mission statement by promoting activities and causes that improve fellowship among residents and enhance the general environment of the community.

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

Do you know the Air Force anthem: Off We To Into The Wild Blue Yonder? Well, **Marilee Plaks** sure does. In fact, she is a triple threat. She sings it, plays it and flies it!

Marilee grew up in Endicott, NY and is a professional musician. She sings and plays the clarinet. A graduate of the University of Puget Sound, Marilee taught at the Hartford Conservatory of Music and did solo work with a corral in Hartford, CN. As a member of the Mid-America Corral, she toured the Midwest singing in public schools and public events while performing solo at other venues. Additionally, Merilee sang professionally in churches and taught voice and clarinet in her home and in private schools.



After moving to Seattle, WA with her husband Arved, Marilee continued her career and joined the Boeing Flying Club. Subsequent to learning all the parts of the plane and their functions and passing the written and flight exams, Marilee became a pilot at the age of 55. (She says it is never to late to fulfill your dreams!) Marilee purchased a Cessna 172, had it modified to suit her small stature and proceeded to fly around the country. Vacations were taken for sight-seeing and to visit friends and family. Her most memorable flights were flying around the Statue of Liberty and over the Grand Canyon.

After moving to the Houston area, she became Director of Music at the Bay Area Unitarian Church and continued her flying until a hurricane destroyed her plane. Retiring at 70, she continues to play the Clarinet and Recorders.

Marilee and Arved have 4 children and have traveled to England, Scotland, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Denmark, Sweden, Greece, Italy and Egypt.



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BELLAVITA MENS CLUB

Cris Barrera, President

It is a fun and rewarding to be part of the Mens Club and an opportunity to mix and mingle with fellow residents. We try to keep the meetings informative and interesting. A Director from the HOA often attends the meetings and keeps us aware of what the Homeowners Association is up to. The members can ask questions and offer any comments to the Director. We discuss upcoming events sponsored by the Mens Club. Our meetings normally last 30 to 45 minutes.



To be a member, any BellaVita male resident simply needs to show up on the first Wednesday of the month. We have tasty food and drink at 6:30 p.m. and the meeting starts at 7 p.m. You'll be most welcomed and you'll be happy you came.

Past events have included the Super Bowl Party in February 2014, Burgers & Chips on Movie Night in January 2014, Fish Fry in November 2013.



WE COMMUNICATE!

The Communication Committee wishes to thank Thordean Campbell for her year's of service as Chairperson and to welcome **Bob Stockinger** as its new Chairperson and **Carolyn Beeson** as the editor of the Buzz.

Remember us? We are the one's who let you know about your community's business, activities, goals and accomplishments, events, and areas of general interest.

Primarily, this is done through the BellaVita Buzz and also through the Block Captains who bring you periodic written and verbal communication. In combination with the Daily and Weekly News, we provide your official communication about BellaVita. Currently, we meet the second Tuesday of each month and welcome new members. Residents who are interested in participating should contact Bob or Carolyn for more information.

We have a some great people in BellaVita and hope to promote a sense of community and encourage your participation in its activities!



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SEWING GROUP CONTINUES SERVICE TO TEXAS AND THE PHILIPPINES

Another year and we are at work again after a month's hiatus during the holidays. 101 Little Dresses were shipped the first week in January to the Philippines for distribution to the typhoon victims. Our plan for 2014 is to continue making Quilts of Valor for the service veterans. 11 of our quilts went to the Texas Region 4 Coordinator to be distributed to returning warriors at a ceremony in Austin in February. The Linus Blanket Project will receive our small quilts for sick children. Last year we completed 32 little quilts. If you noticed the arts and craft room decorated for the holidays, it was not Santa's elves, but the sewing group who made the ornaments and Christmas trees on the wall. We also put up the decorations and took them down with a lot of help from our friends. Again we say a big THANK YOU to this community for all the help and support we receive all year long.

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AWARDS COMMITTEE

Mary Ellen Henry, Chairperson



This will mark the first year we will have the privilege of honoring those who have 5 years of volunteer service at BellaVita. These people will be honored at the March Board Meeting and reception in a very special way. Service includes volunteering on committees, in clubs, as Block Captains, task forces or other group activities. We are blessed to have 100+ people who give of their time to make this an awesome place to live.

The committee will meet in early March to review the nominations submitted for the Rose Award. We have encouraged residents to nominate someone who has "Served Extraordinarily" during 2013. A special Rose Award will be given at the March meeting.

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Pictured here are some of our residents celebrating New Year's Eve.

TEC

The TEC elected new officers who took office February. They are Linda Stanton, President, Maria Trevino, Vice President, Carlos Trevino, Secretary, and Emily Marshburn, Treasurer. A Mirdi Gras parade will occur the first of March to be followed by a party and live band.

Pictured here is our New Year's Eve celebration. We had a great time and a wonderful 2013.

NEW (TEMPORARY) WINTER RESIDENT



We had a new temporary resident at BellaVita. He lived on the lake, near the waterfall. Like most of us, he was a little gray and moved slower than usual. As a matter of fact, he mostly just sat around. His hobbies were sunbathing and swimming. Perhaps he will return next year and we can drop by and welcome him back! Picture on our lake, taken by Ted Hook.

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March 2014

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